

Story 1822 1970 Tape 16)

Narrator: Unidentified old
man who told tales
1817, 1820, 1821

Location: Karaağaç village,
Karacabey kaza,
Bursa Province

Date: 1970

Albanian¹ Greetings from Somewhere

The Albanian Cemal² was a very sick man. One day he was talking with an Albanian friend about his illness. The friend asked him, "Cemal, what can I do to be of help to you?"

"I should be very pleased if you would go to my hometown and deliver a letter there for me," said Cemal.

"All right. I shall go there and do that, but where is your hometown, and where in that town do you want the letter delivered?"

Cemal answered, "You go to the first of those distant hills over there, to the second hill, to the

¹Like the preceding tale, this one is said to be about an Albanian, but he does not have a single Albanian ethnic trait. In Turkish tales Lazs are frequently stereotyped as being stupid or inept, and occasionally the Albanian is also so stereotyped.

²The name Cemal suggests that the narrator is here being influenced by the Laz stereotype. In Laz dialect the popular Turkish name Kemal is almost always pronounced Cemal, the c in Turkish being pronounced like the j or soft g in English.

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third hill. When you reach the third hill, you will see a market area.³ When you enter that area, go to the first door, go to the second door, go to the third door and stop there. That is our door. When you knock on the door, an old man will open it. He will have a beard on his chin. He will have a coarse woolen cloak⁴ on his back. And he will breathe in a gasping way. He is our father. If he should ask about Cemal, tell him, 'Cemal was taken by Gabriel.'⁵ Now only Allah knows where he is, whether he is up there somewhere in the sky or down here on earth.'" Cemal was in this way breaking the news of his coming death to his father

The friend followed Cemal's traveling directions and found the home of Cemal's father. When the old man answered the friend's knock on the front door, the friend handed him the letter. Looking at the letter, the old man said, "Oh, it is from Cemal! How is he? Where is he now?"

³The narrator here uses the dialect word kirnepe--roughly, shopping center.

⁴A traditional garment known as an aba.

⁵Gabriel (Cebrail) is the messenger of Allah, but almost always the supernatural being who comes to take a human life is Azrail, the angel of death.

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The Albanian friend answered, "Well, Gabriel came and took him. Now only Allah knows where he is, whether up there in the sky or down here on earth. But, anyway, he sends you his greetings!"